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C O N F I D E N T I A L VATICAN 002901

SIPDIS

EUR/WE (D.MENNUTI); EAP/CM; EAP/RSP/TC
BEIJING ALSO FOR AMCONSUL CHENGDU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/14/2012

TAGS: [CH](#) [IT](#) [PREL](#) [TW](#) [VT](#)

SUBJECT: SUBJECT: NO RED CARPET FOR TAIWAN PRESIDENT AT
VATICAN.

CLASSIFIED BY: CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR JIM NICHOLSON. REASONS 1.5(B,D
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[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: PLANS ARE AFOOT FOR TAIWAN PRESIDENT CHEN TO
TRANSIT ITALY THIS JULY ON TRAVEL FROM TAIPEI TO AFRICA,
ACCORDING TO TAIWAN EMBOFF, YET THE VATICAN IS NOT PUTTING
OUT THE RED CARPET. TAIWAN FM EUGENE Y.H. CHIEN MET MAY 30
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PAGE 02 VATICA 02901 140953Z
WITH VATICAN FM ARCHBISHOP JEAN-LOUIS TAURAN, YET REACHED NO
AGREEMENT ON VATICAN MEETINGS FOR PRESIDENT CHEN. BEHIND
CLOSED DOORS, THE VATICAN PROTESTED TAIWAN DOMESTIC POLICIES
THAT IT BELIEVES BLOCK CHURCH EXPANSION.
END SUMMARY.

[1](#)1. (C) TAIWAN EMBOFF PETER TING TOLD POLOFF JUNE 5 THAT TAIWAN
FOREIGN MINISTER EUGENE Y.H. CHIEN'S MAY 30 MEETING WITH
VATICAN FM JEAN-LOUIS TAURAN BROUGHT WHAT HE CALLED THORNY
BILATERAL ISSUES TO THE FORE. FM TAURAN LODGED A COMPLAINT
ABOUT TAIPEI'S DELISTING OF DECEMBER 25 AS A TAIWAN NATIONAL
HOLIDAY (PREVIOUSLY JUSTIFIED TO COMMEMORATE THE PROMULGATION
OF THE 1936 CONSTITUTION.) TAURAN FURTHER PROTESTED TAIPEI
ZONING LAWS WHICH, THE VATICAN CLAIMS, IMPEDE CONSTRUCTION OF
NEW SEMINARIES. MOST IMPORTANTLY, THERE WAS NO VATICAN
AGREEMENT FOR MEETINGS WITH TAIWAN PRESIDENT CHEN SHUI-BIAN
SHOULD HE TRANSIT ITALY IN JULY.

[1](#)2. (C) TAIWAN PRESIDENT CHEN IS TENTATIVELY PLANNING A VISIT
TO AFRICA IN JULY THAT WOULD INCLUDE TRANSIT TRAVEL THROUGH
INDIA AND ITALY, ACCORDING TO TAIWAN EMBOFF. TAIWAN, WHICH
ENJOYS DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE VATICAN, WOULD NORMALLY
SEEK A VISIT, YET THE VATICAN, TING SAID, HAS NOT BEEN
ENCOURAGING. CONSEQUENTLY, TAIWAN WAS NOW THINKING IN TERMS
OF AN OVERNIGHT AIRPORT STOP AT MILAN AND A PRIVATE DINNER,
POSSIBLY WITH PROMINENT VATICAN OR GOI LEADERS, ACCORDING TO
TING.

[1](#)3. TAIWAN FM CHIEN ALSO SAW FORMER VATICAN
DFM ARCHBISHOP CLAUDIO CELLI. CELLI, WHO AS DFM REACHED A
BREAKTHROUGH AGREEMENT WITH VIETNAM ON RELIGIOUS PRACTICE,
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PAGE 03 VATICA 02901 140953Z
NOW HAS PRINCIPAL OVERSIGHT OF PRC-VATICAN DIALOG. TING SAID
CHIEN AND CELLI DISCUSSED THE STATUS OF VATICAN-PRC DIALOG --
STALLED UNTIL THE PRC RESOLVES SUCCESSION OF PARTY LEADERSHIP
-- AND LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS FOR VATICAN-TAIWAN RELATIONS.
SINCE 1999 VARIOUS VATICAN OFFICIALS HAVE VOCALLY REITERATED
THE STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF STATE (PRIME
MINISTER-EQUIVALENT) CARDINAL SODANO THAT THE VATICAN IS
READY TO DOWNGRADE TIES WITH TAIPEI OVERNIGHT IF BEIJING
AGREES TO DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ON ACCEPTABLE TERMS. TING
ADMITTED TAIWAN INCREASINGLY VIEWED THIS VATICAN STANCE WAS
INSULTING, A MARKED DEPARTURE FROM THE GENERALLY CAUTIOUS AND
POSITIVE COMMENTARY THAT HIS MISSION RESERVES FOR THE
VATICAN, THE SOLE GOVERNMENT IN EUROPE TO RECOGNIZE TAIWAN.

[1](#)4. COMMENT: TAIWAN LATELY HAS BEEN TESTING THE LIMITS OF
ITS VATICAN FRIENDSHIP AS WELL AS OF THE LATERAN ACCORDS, THE
ITALIAN-VATICAN AGREEMENT THAT INTER ALIA REQUIRES ITALY
GRANT TRANSIT VISAS FOR FOREIGN OFFICIALS ON VATICAN VISITS.
TAIWAN VP ANNETTE LU SWUNG THROUGH THE VATICAN IN MARCH FOR
WHAT THE VATICAN'S CHINA DESK OFFICER, MSGR. ROTA-GRAZIOSI,
DISMISSED AS A MEANINGLESS CEREMONIAL MEETING WITH FM TAURAN.
FM CHIEN'S MEETINGS ARE A PRELUDE TO AN ATTEMPTED
PRESIDENTIAL VISIT THAT THE VATICAN IS UNLIKELY TO GRANT.
THE VATICAN IS SUPPORTIVE OF ITS TAIWAN FRIENDS, YET WILL NOT
BE PARTY TO GRATUITOUS PROVOCATIONS OF THE PRC, PARTICULARLY
AMID THE RUN-UP TO THE PRC PARTY CONGRESS THIS FALL AND THE
VATICAN'S EVIDENT HOPE TO KICK-START DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS
SOON THEREAFTER.
NICHOLSON

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PAGE 04 VATICA 02901 140953Z